

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE DAMASCUS 1528

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINR, EG

SUBJ: NEW EGYPTIAN CABINET MINISTER FOR AVIATION, HAMDI ABU ZAYD

REF: CAIRO 3835

1. ABU ZAYD SERVED SO BRIEFLY AS EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR TO SYRIA (EARLY FEBRUARY TO MID-APRIL 1975) THAT WE HAVE LITTLE IMPRESSION OF HIM EITHER PERSONALLY OR PROFESSIONALLY.

2. HIS ELDEST SON MARRIED AN AMERICAN CITIZEN AND IS WORKING IN A NEW YORK BANK (CHEMICAL?) AS A TRAINEE PREPARATORY TO ASSIGNMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HE MET HIS FUTURE WIFE WHEN BOTH WERE STUDENTS IN A SOUTHWESTERN U.S. COLLEGE. ONE OTHER CHILD IS STILL IN UNIVERSITY IN EGYPT WHILE A THIRD HAS GRADUATED AND IS WORKING IN EGYPT.

3. IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT ABU ZAYD GOT OFF TO A RELATIVELY SLOW START IN DAMASCUS, PROBABLY BECAUSE HE ARRIVED AT A LOW POINT IN EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN RELATIONS.

HIS ACCESS TO SYRIAN GOVERNMENT AND BAATH PARTY LEADERSHIP APPEARED LIMITED. IN EXTENDED PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR FOLLOWING THE SUSPENSION OF THE SECRETARY'S MISSION, ABU ZAYD DISCUSSED HIS DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE PROSPECT OF A RENEWED CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND
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URGED CONTINUED AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES.

4. BOTH THE AMBASSADOR AND MRS. ABU ZAYD SPEAK FLUENT
ENGLISH. SHE IS A HANDSOME, RATHER STYLISH LADY WITH AN
OFF-PUTTING MANNERISM, A SNARLING LAUGH.
MURPHY

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